ceived his multiengine commercial instrument rating. In his spare time, he also plays tennis, boats, waterskis and sings in the community choir.

Born in Rome, Di Mizio graduated high school with an accounting major, then came to the United States when he was 21. Once in the United States, he joined forces with his brother, company president Giancarlo Di Mizio (a Florida resident today, along with founder Frank Luca), who was already opening up a store. He went to Marian College for the first five years that he was in Indianapolis, earning a double major in accounting and Spanish.

"While going to college, I worked at the pizza restaurant," he recalls. "Well, I worked in an accounting firm for a year, and then I joined the pizza business."

Luca's managers are encouraged to avoid burnout. "I believe a manager has to have personal time," says Di Mizio. "He cannot work 70 hours, even though the restaurant might want him 70 hours a week. I encourage our managers to organize themselves in such a way that they can delegate duties and have their time off.

"I want to create a good environment for my workers," he adds. "I want to reward them for their hard work. Without good workers, our company could not exist. I want to give them good pay for good, quality work. I definitely do not want to stretch our workers and use them just for the money, just for the business.

"We have managers who have been with us for 10 years or more. They have been here since their stores first opened, and they are still with us."

Cautious Computerization

While the home office has had computers for more than 10 years, Luca management approaches computerization in the stores with caution. "One thing that I don't want to be getting into is to be submerged with numbers," explains Di Mizio. "Yes, we could compile figures on how many ounces of cheese are used all year, but do I really need that information? I don't want to get myself sidetracked from being a 'people' person."

Freeland agrees: "I've seen a lot of good stores go out of business even though the guy does excellent paperwork. We don't want the manager in the back with two tons of papers to fill out. We want him in the front talking to the people. So we try to keep the paperwork as simple and concise as possible. Our managers just have to keep track of the payroll, basic food ordering and sales. We have been gradually switching our stores over to computerized registers, which are to aid the managers in their operations as well as the registers' ability to interconnect with our computers in the home office to provide immediate information.

"The idea," adds Freeland, "is to make what we have even better, stronger, and really fine tune it before we build up. One reason we've been approached by some of the mall owners is because we've established a reputation for taking a failing location and managed to turn the business around and clean it up." A lot can be accomplished by adding better employees and management, nice uniforms, a better display and a pleasant atmosphere.

With success has come a few unexpected problems. One is a saturation of the market as malls add more and more restaurants. Labor is also a problem in booming Indianapolis, where unemployment rates are rock bottom. Everyone is looking for good people to hire.

"It's hard to find family people who need a job, who want to work, who are very dedicated to the job. One feels they hardly exist anymore," says Di Mizio. "Today, people want to work less and have less dedication."

Luca tries to find and keep good workers by offering them old-fashioned values. "Be honest about everything you do," says Di Mizio. "Whenever you make a promise, stick with it. Do not give them a dream that is impossible to achieve. Give them a good foundation — those fine points — and if they stick with it, they will be automatically successful and have a future.

"Another important thing is: Surround yourself with good people. Make sure they're honest, dedicated workers. Then they're going to do the job, and they are going to surround themselves with good people, too."

"It's all so simple," concludes Freeland. "It's just good food, a clean place, good people with good personalities, and a dedication to do their job. It is that simple."

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